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posted by Heritage Auction Galleries on their HA.com Web site. NGC-certified rarities can be found throughout the series.
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Bowers and Merena Brings More Than 3,000 Lots to Baltimore as Official Auctioneer

Highlights of June 4-7 Sale Include Exceptional 1854 Type II Gold Dollar in NGC MS-68 and 1920-S Saint-Gaudens Double Eagle in NGC MS-63.
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NCS Conserves Coins Recovered from the Steamship New York

Posted on 5/21/2008

NGC's conservation affiliate, NCS, has been selected to conserve the coins recovered from the SS New York, which was lost at sea in the mid-19th Century.

1844-O $5 NGC MS64.
Click image to enlarge.

[Sarasota, FL] – Numismatic Conservation Services (NCS) has been selected to conserve the coins recovered from the SS New York shipwreck. The coins comprise a diverse cross section of coins in circulation at the first part of the 19th Century, including an important group of exceptional quality southern mint gold coins. Numismatic Guaranty Corporation (NGC) has been chosen to certify the coins following their conservation.

The SS New York operated a light cargo and passenger service between New Orleans and Galveston including military and post office contract passage until it foundered during a hurricane on September 7, 1846. Seventeen of the 53 crew and passengers were lost, along with "thirty to forty thousand dollars in gold, silver, and bank notes," according to contemporary reports. The ship was first discovered in 1990 by an amateur diver and Louisiana oilfield worker who relied on reports of snags from local shrimp fisherman to pinpoint the wreck. After completion of archeological survey conducted by the Minerals Management Service, and gaining legal title to the wreck, the original discoverers returned to recover the ship's coins in 2006.

While primarily "treasure seekers," they were also concerned about the historic value and preservation of the artifacts they salvaged. "We chose NCS to handle the post-recovery process because of their unique capabilities and expertise in working with shipwreck coins. Their process maintains the historical pedigree that was important to us and also renders the most beautiful artifacts," comments

Craig DeRouen of the recovery operation. NCS also conserved all coins recovered from the historic shipwreck SS Republic.

"Together NCS and NGC offer the only professional services to conserve shipwreck coins and then certify them, preserving the integrity and history of these coins. The coins from the SS New York demonstrate this with their wonderful quality and rich diversity, both markers of their considerable importance," relates NGC Chairman Mark Salzberg, who oversaw the certification of the coins from the SS New York.

Far Hills, NJ coin dealer John Albanese appraised these coins for the recovery group, and notes, "The coins are worth more than a million dollars, and many of them look like they were just minted yesterday." Among the valuable highlights are extraordinarily well preserved gold coins from mints in Louisiana, Georgia and North Carolina, such as an 1845-D $2.5 NGC MS64, 1844-D $5 NGC MS63★ PL, and 1844-O $5 NGC MS64.

1844-D $5 NGC MS63★ PL.
Click image to enlarge.

The coins are indeed diverse. In addition to the trove of high grade southern mint issues, there were a number of foreign coins found, including a rare mintmark 1816PN FR Colombia 8 escudos graded NGC AU58 and an extensive run of German 10 thalers. A number of silver coins were recovered as well, including the first and only US silver dollar found on a shipwreck, a 1795 Flowing Hair Dollar, and a scarce 1815/2 Capped Bust Half Dollar. A rare C. Bechtler $5 pioneer gold coin was also recovered. The diversity of coinage speaks to the sophistication of southern merchants during the mid-1800's, who conducted transactions using a startling range of gold and silver pieces struck around the world and spanning several decades.

Following conservation, coins were submitted to NGC for certification and were encapsulated with a decorative label and the pedigree SS NEW YORK. The NGC holder has been designed for long-term preservation and is identical in composition to the holder developed by NGC and NCS for the Smithsonian Institution, which conducted extensive tests before using it to house its most valuable holdings.

1845-D $2.5 NGC MS64.
Click image to enlarge.

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United States

The Final "Three Branches of Government" Proof American Platinum Eagles

Posted on 5/21/2008

The third and final design in the American Eagle Platinum Proof series, which celebrates the three branches of U.S. government, debuted this month.

The final design in the three-year American Eagle Platinum Proof series celebrating the three branches of U.S. government, debuted this month. Last week, the U.S. Mint began taking orders for the coins that honor the judiciary branch. The latest coins are stately, with a historic feel. All American Eagle Platinum Proof Coins contain 99.95 percent platinum.

Images courtesy of US Mint. click to enlarge.

Struck in four sizes to fit coin collector's budgets, this year's coin emblazon on the reverse the image of Lady Justice with her scales suspended from a finger of her right hand, and a sword in the left. On the background is the bald eagle-an American symbol of courage and freedom-watching over the Lady with its wings spread wide. The unique feature of the series is that these are the only U.S. bullion coins that change reverse designs every year.

United States Mint Artistic Infusion Program Master Designer Joel Iskowitz sculpted the coin's reverse. The engraving was done by Mint Sculptor-Engraver Charles Vickers. The obverse-designed and engraved by United States Mint Sculptor-Engraver John Mercanti remains unchanged and bears the now familiar image of Lady Liberty, symbolizing vigilance and faithfulness to duty.

The coins were minted at United States Mint at West Point, and they bear the “W” mintmark indicating their origin. Each coin is shipped from the Mint housed in a

plastic capsule. The US Mint's price of its platinum coins this year shot up about 40 percent compared to last year, even though the mintage limit remains the same.

The proof 2008 one-ounce coin has a mintage limit of 6,000. The half-ounce has a mintage limit of 5,000. The quarter-ounce coin also has a mintage limit of 5,000. The tenth-ounce coin has the highest individual mintage limit, set at 10,000. All four coins are also sold together as a set with a mintage limit of 10,000.

All US Bullion coins are eligible for NGC's Early Releases designation, including those struck for collectors in proof formats. In order for 2008 Platinum Proof Eagles to qualify, they must be received by NGC on Saturday, June 7, 2008. Note that coins do not need to be sent with Mint packaging, but simply must be received before the cut-off date.

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Thinkin' of Lincoln

Posted on 5/21/2008

2009 is the bicentennial of Lincoln's birth, and a silver dollar is already scheduled to mark the occasion. David W. Lange discusses both past and future coin commemorations of the Great Emancipator, as well as the likely fate of the penny.

With the bicentennial of Abraham Lincoln's birth approaching in 2009, there will certainly be numerous medallic tributes. Already legislated for that year is a non-circulating commemorative silver dollar, as well as a program of circulating commemorative U.S. cents of the current brass-clad zinc composition. These cents will feature four different reverses, depicting various stages in Lincoln's life.

There is nothing newsworthy in the silver dollar. Despite flagging interest in recent commemoratives, this issue is likely to sell out, or at least come close. The cents, however, pose a number of challenges. First, will these coins circulate as intended? Though billions will be coined, it's likely that a sizable percentage of these cents will be hoarded by collectors, speculators, and the general public. To a lesser extent, this was also true of the first Lincoln cents, which debuted in 1909. The difference between then and now is that the cent was still a viable medium of exchange a century ago. Once the coin's novelty had passed, many of the sequestered cents ultimately were spent.

Despite claims to the contrary — by a lobbying group for the zinc industry that poses as a consumer organization — cents are no longer circulating coins, in the traditional sense. Yes, they are still given out as change by some businesses, but they are seldom recirculated by their recipients, who are more likely to simply toss them into a jar.

Already in the news is the issue of the cent's cost. It has been many years since

the Treasury was able to manufacture, count, and ship these coins for one cent or less per unit. This loss had been hidden within the seigniorage on the more profitable, high-value coins, but that cat is now quite publicly out of the bag. The new law requiring special bicentennial Lincoln cents has postponed what should have been the death of the one-cent piece, as no one in Congress wants to deprive the Great Emancipator (and the Illinois congressional delegation) of their place in the sun.

Ideally, once this celebrated anniversary is over, so too should be the cent. My own opinion is that the coin may be included within the Mint's proof and uncirculated sets, perhaps in its former bronze composition, but its role as a circulating coin has already ceased. It would thus join the dollar and the half dollar as coins whose only purpose now is to fill collectors' albums and registry sets.

The U.S. Mint toyed with the idea of portraying Abraham Lincoln on the nation's coins decades before the debut of the current Lincoln cent. Pattern five-cent pieces dated 1866 were struck in a number of metals and feature a bust of the recently deceased president similar to that seen on many tokens of the period. Compared to photographs of the man, this portrait is not a good likeness, and the desire to reunite the northern and southern states after four years of war doomed any such proposal at the time. Indeed, there was still some lingering resentment among southerners in 1909, when Old Abe finally did make it to a circulating coin.

The story of how Victor D. Brenner came to design the Lincoln cent of 1909 may be found in books on this series, so it won't be repeated here. What is worth noting, however, is that his bust of the president, while quite appealing as art, is not particularly accurate. Brenner captured Lincoln's profile, but he gave Abe tightly curled hair that the man simply did not have. Instead, Lincoln had wavy hair of broad curls, as seen on our current five-dollar notes. While both Brenner and Charles Burt (who engraved the note's portrait) worked from well known photos of Lincoln, Brenner alone opted to interpret the image in his own fashion.

There were those within the Treasury Department who did not think much of the new cent, and artist James Earle Fraser (of Buffalo nickel fame) actually created a proposed replacement portrait in 1911. This was intended for the five-cent piece, and although his model was also reduced to cent size, neither version went beyond the concept stage. This was a superior work to the Brenner bust, but the notion of changing the cent or replicating its subject matter on the nickel was simply too controversial to proceed.

Better than Brenner's cent was the bust of Lincoln that appeared on the Illinois Centennial half dollar, issued as a non-circulating commemorative in 1918.

George T. Morgan copied his work from the statue of Abraham Lincoln by Andrew O'Connor, which stands in Illinois's capital, Springfield. This depicts Abe as a young man, sans whiskers. A similar pose to that in O'Connor's statue appears on the Illinois Statehood quarter dollar of 2003. Of course, reproducing nearly a full-length figure on such a small coin makes it all but impossible to determine the merits of this artwork, and the man's facial features are nearly unrecognizable.

It would be desirable for the 2009 commemorative cents to have a new portrait of Abraham Lincoln, one of greater artistic merit than the current entry. Unfortunately, this coin is now so mired in political and economic considerations that its value as a piece of art and as a circulating medium have both been rendered irrelevant to Congress.

David W. Lange's column, "USA Coin Album," appears monthly in The Numismatist*, the official publication of American Numismatic Association*.

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1987 Kennedy Half Dollars

Posted on 5/21/2008

Because it was never released into circulation, the 1987 Kennedy Half Dollar is considered a numismatic anomaly — and yet the coin is not a semi-key for the series. Jay Turner has the full story.

The 1987 Kennedy Half Dollars are considered anomalies in numismatics. Unlike other Kennedy circulation issue coins, the 1987 Kennedy Half Dollars issued by the Philadelphia and Denver Mints were never released into circulation and were only placed into United States Mint Uncirculated Sets, creating what many would think would be a semi-key for the series, as is often the case with circulation issue coins not released into circulation. This unfortunately is not true.

The 1987 Uncirculated Sets had a dramatic mintage for the year, with 2,908,145 issued, dramatically higher than sets of the previous few years, and sets issued thereafter. Because of this high mintage of sets, no shortage of 1987 Half Dollars ever occurred, even though they were never officially released into circulation. The demand for the coin was more than satisfied by cutting up mint sets.

The other issue with 1987 Kennedy Half Dollars is that, since all coins were issued in Uncirculated Mint Sets, the majority will remain in uncirculated, or better, condition. According to the NGC population report, 357 coins have been graded by NGC, with grades ranging from MS 63 to one grading MS 68.

While the 1987 Half Dollar is very elusive but not impossible to find in circulation and rolls, the coin remains very easy to obtain in a 1987 Mint Set, which still trades close to the $7 issue price. While it is not a Key Date, it is likely that only very high-grade, certified pieces will bring significant premiums.

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Higher Powers of Magnification

Posted on 5/21/2008

A set of high-magnification hand lenses is an invaluable tool for numismatists. However, magnification of 10× and up is only recommended for spotting signs of counterfeiting. Skip Fazzari offers these tips and more.

There are a host of things to see on coins. No matter what you are looking for, after a quick perusal, most collectors will seek some type of magnification to enlarge their view of the coin they are examining. I travel with an assortment of hand lenses. There is a 20×, a 10×, and a combination 3×/4×/7×. Beginning with an overall view to address shape, color, and design, a grader will also be looking at a coin's luster and for imperfections that detract from its eye appeal. Error/variety collectors will be looking for doubling on its design, planchet/striking problems, overdates, and overmintmarks. Authenticators will need to look more closely at its surface for die polish marks, tooling, and characteristics common to counterfeit or altered coins.

Four or five powers of magnification seem to be the norm for many collectors. At these powers, an entire coin may be viewed all at once, which is especially useful when grading. Nevertheless, unless you are an experienced numismatist, you will not be able to see characteristics such as metal flow, die doubling, and counterfeit diagnostics on many coins when using minimal magnification. The micrograph shows the head detail of a genuine 1861-O "CSA Obverse" Seated half dollar. This view is close to what you would expect to see when using a 10× hand lens. The quality of its luster and surface is easily determined. The diagnostic die break through Liberty's nose is sharp. At this power, a few radial flow lines are visible at the coin's rim and it becomes easier to determine if any luster breaks on Liberty's breast are due to cabinet friction or friction wear from circulation. Note that at 10×, you can only view large coins a section at a time. We can examine the coin for circulation wear but we have narrowed our field of view considerably, making it more difficult to judge how any bag marks affect the eye appeal of this specimen. One well known dealer has told me that at 10× magnification, "You cannot see the

forest for the trees." It's his opinion that this is too much power for coin grading.

Powers of magnification over 10× are best saved for counterfeit detection. Ten power is also a convenient magnification for variety hunters. Higher powers may also be used; however, most micro-doubled dies and any variety needing 20× to identify may be interesting to find but they are not universally popular at the moment except by some collectors and specialists. For example, although the "Redbook" lists just one major variety of 1972 Doubled Die cent; I believe variety collectors have identified more than a dozen varieties of this cent with smaller amounts of doubling.

While some experienced authenticators can detect a counterfeit coin using low powers of magnification or even their unaided eyes, 10× and higher should be the norm for authenticators who are searching for clues to identify new, "state-of-the-art" counterfeits. At these powers, characteristic defects transferred to the fake by counterfeit dies become apparent.

This article was previously featured in Numismatic News.

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Rising Prices Motivating New Collectors

Posted on 5/21/2008

Acquiring "finest known" coins has suddenly blossomed into a full-blown market frenzy. But, as NumisMedia reports, the demand (and the opportunities) are not restricted solely to high-value numismatic rarities.

A guest article from NumisMedia

This has long since been a very real market and the competition for hundred-thousand-dollar coins is quite intense. It all began with the idea that one collector could never outdo another in a game of acquisition for the "finest known" coins within a specific series and date. This has blossomed into a frenzy, the magnitude of which could not have been predicted. The depth of this market continues to grow every day, as high-value numismatic rarities continue to attract the thrust of interest by dealers and collectors.

The Central States Numismatic Society Convention was held in Rosemont, Illinois, in mid-April and the consensus was that it was very successful for most of the dealers in attendance. There was enough new material to excite dealers and collectors, although prices were at premiums higher than previous levels. A hot market leads to rising prices, motivates new collectors wanting the best their money can buy, and inspires dealers to take advantage of both.

In addition, the Heritage Signature Sale realized a fantastic $44 million. The highlight, of course, was the 1804 Class I Original Bust Dollar. More often than not, it is called the "King of American coins"; this one was certified by NGC as PR 62. This is one of those bona fide rarities, in which case grade is not as important as the actual date of the coin. Another true classic rarity is the 1838 O Bust Half Dollar. It does not come onto the market very often and when it does, it usually sets another price record for the grade. The latest one offered by Heritage was a PR 45 and realized $276,000. Among other highlights are the following:

Denomination	Grade	Price Realized
1804 Bust Quarter	NGC MS 65	$310,500
1839 No Drapery Quarter	NGC PR 65	$517,500
1842 Seated Quarter Sm Date	NGC PR 64	$126,500
1839 Seated Half No Drapery	NGC PR 62	$138,000
1794 Flowing Hair Dollar	NGC AU 58	$488,750
1849 Seated Dollar	NGC PR 67	$230,000
1855 Seated Dollar	NGC MS 64	$149,500
1870 S Seated Dollar	NGC XF 40	$805,000
1879 $4 Gold FH	NGC PR 65	$201,250
1820 $5 Gold Curl 2 LL	PCGS MS 65	$253,000
1827 $5 Gold	NGC MS 64	$126,500
1871 CC $20 Gold	NGC MS 64	$414,000
1932 $20 Gold Saint	PCGS MS 66	$161,000

The Dollar market is extremely active, with the majority of dealers needing large quantities for their customers. From average circulated coins to those certified in all Mint State grades, FMV has been moving higher over the last couple of months. Rare dates are very difficult to locate and, if they are upper-end quality for the grade, they will bring premiums over the current FMV. For example, the 1893 S in MS 65 is currently listed with an FMV of $481,250; however, one dealer will pay $500,000 for a coin that meets his specific grading criteria. It would be very interesting to see if there are any available in the market.

Anxious collectors with vast sums of money are driving Deep Mirror Prooflike Morgan Dollars in finest known condition to higher levels. We have noted aggressive increases in the FMV over the last several months and it does not look like there is any slowing of momentum in sight. In March we listed the FMV for 1899 S in MS 66 at $28,130; this month the FMV is $37,310. The 1889 S in MS 66 is up over $14,000 since March, from $47,190 to $61,560. The 1903 in MS 65 was listed at $25,310 in March and today it has an FMV of $33,440. There are numerous other examples of DMPL Dollars rising in this fashion. These increases are mostly due to dealers attempting to shake loose as many of these dates as possible from the present owners. Some dealers are successful but several of these rare dates are simply not available.

In the same vein, GSA Dollars are active as well. Dealers have noted an increase in the number of collectors of GSA Dollars, especially Carson City, certified by NGC. Market makers need the highest grades for Registry collectors, but the census indicates very few coins have been certified in the highest grades. This limits the number of collectors who can pursue the best certified sets. To further intensify the problem, collectors who already own the highest grades are emphatic about maintaining their positions. This may well mean the only way to acquire a finest known is through a new certification.

One of the healthier recent performers is the rare 1879 CC in the GSA holder. The competition for the lower Mint State grades has led to advancing prices, as many collectors just cannot afford the finest known grades that are few and far between. Here is how the 1879 CC has fared since February.

Grade	February 2008	May 2008
MS 60	$6,150	$6,610
MS 61	$7,200	$7,740
MS 62	$7,380	$7,950
MS 63	$8,220	$9,000
MS 64	$11,820	$13,200

While the recent demand for all NGC-certified GSA Dollars has been on the rise, the P/L and DMPL Carson City Dollars were seemingly being ignored. Such is no longer the case. Many dealers and collectors noticed that the FMV differential between Prooflike and Deep Mirror Prooflike Dollars had not advanced and were too close to regular business strikes. In the last month or so, buyers for P/L and DMPL GSA Dollars have become more aggressive. While the FMV may not show many increases, the prices have solidified and there is much more sales activity at present levels.

The overall market is not restricted to finest known coins. There are many tiers of demand for all series. Finest known or rare coins, middle quality, even average coins for the grade in most series are active, as long as they are priced accordingly.

This is a guest article written by:

The thoughts and opinions in the piece are those of their author and are not necessarily the thoughts of the Certified Collectibles Group.

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United States

NGC Grading On-Site at Long Beach and Baltimore

Posted on 5/21/2008

NGC will accept submissions for on-site grading at the upcoming Long Beach Coin Expo and Whitman Baltimore Coin Show.

NGC will accept submissions for on-site grading at the following upcoming shows:

> May 29–30, 2008
> Long Beach Coin & Collectibles Expo
> Long Beach Convention Center
> Long Beach, CA
> Tables 458–557

> June 5–6, 2008
> Whitman Baltimore Coin & Collectibles Show
> Baltimore Convention Center
> Baltimore, MD
> Tables 1304–1308

Please check with NGC show representatives for daily submission cut-off times. Please read below for complete details on the services offered during these shows:

Gold Special	**$50 per coin**
Gold coins valued $1,500 and less (5 coin minimum).	

Value Walkthrough	**$65 per coin**
Coins valued $1,500 and less.	

Walkthrough	**$100 per coin**
Coins valued $1,501 to $100,000.	

Coins are graded in lots on a first come, first serve basis. Please check with NGC

representatives to determine when your lot is ready. Most coins are returned within 24 to 48 hours.

Special Note: Due to the special handling required, NGC will not accept submissions of the following coins for on-site grading at these shows, nor will regular service submissions be accepted to be returned to the NGC offices:

Presidential Dollars, 20th Anniversary Eagles, Early Releases, American Liberty Series, 10th Anniversary Platinum Sets

These submissions must be sent to the NGC offices in Sarasota, Florida, by the submitter.

Other on-site services offered:

Expedite Walkthrough	**$150 per coin**
Guaranteed 4-hour turnaround; coins valued $100,000 and less. *Coins are returned within four hours or regular show pricing applies.*	

High-Value Walkthrough	**$200 per coin**
4-hour turnaround, coins valued $100,001 to $500,000.	

Unlimited Value Walkthrough	**$500 per coin**
4-hour turnaround, coins valued above $500,000.	

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Rarities Abound in Heritage's May 2008 Long Beach Auction of US Coins

Posted on 5/27/2008

The Official Auction of the May 2008 Long Beach Coin Expo is now posted by Heritage Auction Galleries on their HA.com Web site. NGC-certified rarities can be found throughout the series.

NGC-certified rarities can be found throughout the series included in Heritage's Long Beach catalog – the Official Auction of the May 2008 Long Beach Coin Expo. The auction, being held in California May 28-30, is now posted by Heritage Auction Galleries on their HA.com website. Signature® catalogs for both U.S. and World Coins & Ancients will be presented.

“The strong market is continuing to bring great rarities onto the Heritage auction block,” commented Heritage President Greg Rohan, “with a wide range from Colonials through double eagles. May Long Beach will be an incredible event!“ Altogether, more than 650 consignors are participating in Heritage's May Long Beach auctions.

NGC-certified highlights from Heritage's Long Beach Signature® Auction:

Lot 334: 1891-O 25C Specimen MS65 NGC.

One of only two pieces known since it was first recognized in 1941 when it appeared in Mehl's Dunham Sale. Ex:

William Forrester Dunham (B. Max Mehl FPL, 6/1941); Gene Edwards; 1980 ANA Sale (Steve Ivy, 8/1980), lot 2024; Jascha Heifetz Collection (Superior, 10/1989), lot 3652. From The Silbermünzen Collection.

Lot 493: 1796 15 Stars Half Dollar, O-101, AU55 NGC.

The Draped Bust Small Eagle half dollar, bearing the dates 1796 or 1797, ranks among the lowest mintage of U.S. type coins, with only 3,918 pieces.

Lot 874: 1800 $1 Dotted Date, B-14, BB-194, R.3 MS66 NGC.

The famous Dotted Date dollar has been listed in the IGuide Book Q for a number of years, and this is the finest known survivor.

Lot 2956: 1808 $2.50 MS61 NGC, Breen-6125, BD-1, R.4.

Struck in just this one year, only 2,710 pieces were minted and of that number it has been estimated that fewer than 40 pieces exist today in all grades. Ex: Dr. Robert W. Dingle Collection (Heritage, 6/2001), lot 8829.

Lot 3461: 1907 $10 Wire Rim, Periods, MS67 NGC, Judd-1901, formerly J-1774.

The Periods variants of the 1907 Saint-Gaudens eagle hold an interesting place in American numismatics, as either patterns or regular issues. Only three have been certified finer.

Lot 3799: 1855 $50 Wass Molitor, MS61 NGC. K-9, R.5.

These large $50 “slugs” are simply some of the most impressive artifacts to have survived California's exciting Gold Rush era.

Lot 306: 1820 quarter dollar PR64 NGC. B-1.

A beautiful Choice proof with lovely golden-brown, jade-green, honey-gold, and lilac-gray toning. Ex: Auction '89 (Superior, 7/1989), lot 566, From The Silbermünzen Collection.

Lot 651: 1839 No Drapery half dollar, MS64 NGC. WB-101.

The 1839 No Drapery half is popular both with type collectors (as a one-year subtype in the series) and Seated coinage enthusiasts (as a first year of issue among Seated Liberty halves). Ex: Chalkley (Superior, 1/1990), lot 3565. From

The Silbermünzen Collection.

Lot 667: 1854-O half dollar Arrows MS66 NGC.

The Arrows, No Rays, No Motto type was struck just two years, 1854 and 1855, and mintages at New Orleans were plentiful for both dates. Only three certified finer. Ex: Foxfire.

Lot 718: 1841 half dollar, PR64 NGC.

The 1841 half dollar in proof format is an extreme rarity; NGC and PCGS combined have certified a mere seven examples, and only one has been certified finer. Ex: The Boys Town Sale (Superior Galleries, 5/1990), lot 3803. From The Silbermünzen Collection.

Lot 719: 1845 half dollar, PR64 NGC.

The 1845 proof half dollar is one of the more significant rarities in American numismatics; a sparse four coins have been certified by NGC and PCGS combined. Ex: Stack's (3/1965), lot 447; Superior Galleries (10/1990), lot 3662. Possibly earlier from the World's Greatest Collection (Numismatic Gallery, 4/1945), lot 273. From The Silbermünzen Collection.

Lot 743: 1892-O Micro O half dollar MS65 NGC.

This legendary rarity was known as early as 1893, when Augustus G. Heaton mentioned it in his landmark treatise, Mint Marks. He wrote, “there is one rare variety of this piece [the 1892-O half] with an exceedingly small o, hardly larger than a period.” Ex: Moreira Sale (Superior, 1/1989), lot 4524; Jascha Heifetz Collection (Superior, 10/1989), lot 3770. From The Silbermünzen Collection.

Lot 801: 1795 Flowing Hair, Two Leaves dollar, B-3, BB-11, R.5, AU50 NGC.

A “Silver Plugged” example created in 1795, as a thin silver sliver was added to the blank planchet to increase its weight -- by punching a hole in the planchet and inserting the sliver, which extended slightly past the planchet surface.

Lot 883: 1803 dollar, B-5, BB-252, MS63 NGC.

The obverse die is known only in this single die combination and is only found perfect, while the reverse was used for several different varieties beginning in 1801. Technically, the reverse die was first used in 1802, followed in combination with an 1801 dated obverse, then for these 1803 dollars.

Lot 937: 1871-CC dollar AU58 NGC.

Another of the Carson City Mint's rare silver coins, the entire mintage of 1,376 1871-CC dollars (a figure more suited to 18th century American gold than 19th century silver) was struck in August of that year. Only four known finer.

Lot 1059: 1922 No D Strong Reverse cent, MS64 Red and Brown NGC.

An amazing example of the popular 1922 No D cent with the strong reverse; only examples like the present piece, from the Strong Reverse die pair, also known as Die Pair 2, are the true No D cents.

Lot 1826: (1659) Lord Baltimore Fourpence, Large Bust and Shield. MS62 NGC.

This is the single finest certified Fourpence of Lord Baltimore, and is ex: Wayte Raymond Plate. From The Liberty Collection of American Colonial Coinage, Part Three.

Lot 2070: 1799 Gold Funeral Urn Medal, Baker-166, AU55 NGC.

George Washington was a favorite subject of medalists over the years, and a wide series of death medals were produced; the Funeral Urn medals were part of a series of gold, silver, and tin medals produced by Newburyport, Massachusetts engraver Jacob Perkins.

Ex: F.C.C. Boyd Estate; John J. Ford, Jr. (Stack's, 5/2004), lot 170; Columbus Central States Signature® (Heritage, 4/06), lot 198; FUN Signature® (Heritage, 1/08), lot 2649. From The Liberty Collection of American Colonial Coinage, Part Three.

Lot 2140: 1776 Continental Dollar, CURRENCY, EG FECIT, Pewter, AU53 NGC. Crosby Pl. VIII, Newman 3-D, Breen-1095, R.3.

The Continental dollars may have been intended to retire circulating Continental paper currency, or have served as a pattern for a planned issuance of silver dollars. What is nearly certain is that Elisha Gallaudet is the EG who engraved at least one set of dies--hence the EG FECIT on this variety.

Lot 2345: 1859 cent PR67 NGC.

This is one of the three finest certified of an important one-year type coin, with a reported mintage of just 800 pieces. From The Estate of Robert R. Rollins Collection, Part One.

Lot 3171: 1795 Small Eagle half eagle, BD-3, AU58 NGC.

This scarce variety is the most available of the 1795 Small Eagle half eagles; all other die pairings are rare in an absolute sense.

Lot 3175: 1802/1 half eagle, AU53 NGC. Breen-6440, BD-3, High R.7.

Clearly the rarest of all known 1802/1 half eagle varieties, with about five examples known today.

Lot 3215: 1842-C half eagle, Small Date, AU55 NGC. Variety 4-C, Die State I.

This issue is the rarest Charlotte half eagle, and is also the second rarest Charlotte coin behind the 1849-C Open Wreath gold dollar rarity. Four coins are listed on Winter's most recent Condition Census.

Lot 3266: 1861 half eagle MS65 Star NGC.

Despite its reputation as an available type coin, the 1861 half eagle is surprisingly elusive in better Mint State grades.

Lot 3292: 1878-CC half eagle, AU58 NGC.

The Carson City Mint was preoccupied in 1878 with striking Morgan Dollars (2.2 million coins), and not with half eagles (9,054 pieces); This coin is tied for the second finest certified.

Lot 3324: 1904 Liberty half eagle, PR67 Cameo NGC.

This is the finest 1904 proof Liberty half eagle that we have offered in any of our auctions, the previous best being a PR66 Cameo piece. Only one coin has certified finer.

Lot 3457: 1895 eagle PR65 Ultra Cameo NGC.

This stunning Gem has exceptional aesthetic appeal, and should prove to be a delightful addition to the connoisseur's collection. Both sides have impressively deep mirrors around highly lustrous and brilliant yellow devices. Only two certified finer.

Lot 3458: 1899 eagle, PR68 Star Ultra Cameo NGC.

There is and should be no doubt that this piece is the finest existing 1899 proof eagle.

Lot 3503: 1915 eagle, MS66 Star NGC.

The 1915 $10 enjoyed a high survival rate was quite high, but at the Gem level the 1915 become a condition rarity.

Lot 3622: 1871-CC double eagle AU50 NGC.

The 1871-CC is generally considered the second rarest Carson City $20, in overall rarity and condition rarity.

Lot 3629: 1872-CC double eagle, MS60 NGC.

The 1872-CC is scarce in all grades, and extremely rare in uncirculated grades.

Lot 3763: 1916-S double eagle, MS67 NGC.

The 1916-S is rare as an MS67; none have been certified finer.

Lot 3779: 1927-S double eagle, MS62 NGC.

Of the more than 3.1 million pieces recorded by the San Francisco Mint for the 1927-S $20, only 168 Mint State pieces have been certified in all grades at NGC and PCGS combined.

Lot 3785: (1837-42) C. Bechtler half eagle, 134G, With Star, MS63 NGC. K-20, R.4.

This variety is plentiful and widely available in better grades, making it a favorite of both type and specialty collectors.

Lot 3847: Silver Die Trial of 1864 Liberty Round 50 Cent, BG-1016a, MS62 NGC, R.8

This is one of perhaps two Mint State pieces known; this is NOT the BG-1016A, which has the same obverse as BG-1016, but a BG-1016a, the lowercase “a” signifying a regular BG-1016 but struck in silver.

For more information about Heritage's auctions, and a complete record of prices realized, along with full-color, enlargeable photos of each lot, please visit www.HA.com. To reserve your copy of any Heritage auction catalog, please contact Client Services at 1-800-872-6467, ext. 150, or visit www.HA.com/Catalog to order by email.

This is a guest article from Heritage Auction Galleries. The thoughts and opinions in the piece are those of their author and are not necessarily the thoughts of the Certified Collectibles Group.

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Bowers and Merena Brings More Than 3,000 Lots to Baltimore as Official Auctioneer

Posted on 5/27/2008

Highlights of June 4-7 Sale Include Exceptional 1854 Type II Gold Dollar in NGC MS-68 and 1920-S Saint-Gaudens Double Eagle in NGC MS-63.

Bowers and Merena Auctions returns as official Auctioneer of the Baltimore Coin and Currency Convention with its next scheduled sale, June 4-7, 2008, at the Baltimore Convention Center. This is the second of three official Baltimore auctions by Bowers and Merena in 2008, continuing their longstanding and ongoing association with the convention.

1854 Type II Gold Dollar NGC MS-68. click image to enlarge.

The auction boasts more than 3,000 coin and currency lots and an impressive list of highlights. Topping the list is Lot 3544, a captivating 1854 Type II Gold Dollar rarity certified MS-68 by NGC that is tied with only one other NGC MS-68 as the finest-known 1854 Type II Gold Dollar. This particular specimen possesses razor sharp detail throughout and is perfectly complemented by exceptionally smooth, virtually pristine surfaces. Also worthy of note are Lot 3980, a choice uncirculated 1920-S Saint-Gaudens Double Eagle certified MS-63 by NGC, considered to be a legendary condition rarity in the Saint-Gaudens Series; and Lot 541, an attractive 1926-S Buffalo Nickel graded MS-65 by NGC.

Leading the list of extraordinary currency highlights are Lot 2538, Fr. 118. 1901 $10 Legal Tender Note. PMG Gem Uncirculated 65EPQ; Lot 2638, Fr. 314. 1886 $20 Silver Certificate. PMG Choice Extremely Fine 45; and Lot 2717, Fr. 1180. 1905 $20 Gold Certificate. PMG Very Fine 30.

1920-S Saint-Gaudens Double Eagle NGC MS-63. click image to enlarge.

“Every trip to Baltimore is a much-anticipated event for us at Bowers and Merena,” said Steve Deeds, president. “There is such a strong contingent of coin and currency enthusiasts at every show and we go to great lengths to bring the best selection possible for our auctions. This June auction is no exception, very strong across the board with a wide variety of quality pieces for all interests and all levels of collecting.”

Additional coin highlights include:

- 1926-S Buffalo Nickel. MS-65 (NGC).
- 1918-D Mercury Dime. MS-66 FB (NGC).
- 1804 Capped Bust Right Half Eagle. BD-7, HBCC-3083, Miller-59. Rarity-4. Small 8/Large 8. MS-64 (NGC).
- 1860 Three-Dollar Gold Piece. Proof-65 Cameo (NGC).
- 1937-D Buffalo Nickel. FS-020.2. 3-Legged. MS-66 (NGC).
- 1896 Morgan Silver Dollar. Proof-68★ Ultra Cameo (NGC).
- 1876-CC Liberty Half Eagle. Winter 1-A, the only known dies. MS-61 (NGC).
- 1919-D Mercury Dime. MS-65 FB (NGC).

All lots and images in the Bowers and Merena official Auction of the Baltimore Coin and Currency Convention can be viewed online at www.bowersandmerena.com, and printed catalogs are available upon request by calling 800.458.4646. Pre-auction bids are accepted online, by e-mail, by phone and by fax. Interested bidders are also encouraged to bid in-person at the live auction June 4-7, 2008, or live online through the Bowers and Merena website.

This is a guest article from Bowers and Merena Auctions. The thoughts and opinions in the piece are those of their author and are not necessarily the thoughts of the Certified Collectibles Group.

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